

2013 Maryland FMP Report (July 2014)

Section 13. King Mackerel (*Scomberomorus cavalla*) and Spanish Mackerel (*Scomberomorus maculatus*)

Chesapeake Bay FMP

The warmer months of summer usually bring Spanish mackerel into the Chesapeake Bay where they are caught by both recreational and commercial fishermen.^{1,2} This migratory species is usually available for less than three months but is increasingly important to recreational fishermen. King mackerel are far less common visitors to Maryland's coastal waters.

The Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Coast King and Spanish Mackerel Fishery Management Plan (K/SM FMP) was adopted in 1994. The plan follows the coastal management requirements. The K/SM FMP is scheduled for review during 2014. The two species are managed jointly under the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) 1990 FMP for Spanish Mackerel and the federal Coastal Migratory Pelagics CMP FMP adopted in 1983 by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC). Since 1985, seventeen amendments have been adopted, one applied only to the Gulf of Mexico. Two amendments (20a and 20b) and a framework are currently under SAFMC secretarial review. For specific details on each of the amendments, go to: <http://www.safmc.net/Library/FisheryManagementPlansAmendments/tabid/395/Default.aspx>. Atlantic coastal states comply with the provisions of the 1990 Spanish mackerel ASMFC FMP by implementing creel limits, size limits and seasonal closures. The ASMFC Omnibus Amendment 1 (2011) and Addendum I to the Omnibus Amendment (2013) provide additional authority to manage Spanish mackerel in state and federal waters.

Stock Status

There is no formal stock assessment for either mackerel species in the Chesapeake Bay or along the mid-Atlantic coast. A stock assessment conducted by the Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review Process (SEDAR) in 2012 concluded that Spanish mackerel are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.³ Coastal overfishing had occurred in the 1980's and early 1990's, which led to harvest control regulations and a rebuilding of the depleted stocks. Stock assessments are performed by the Mackerel Stock Assessment Panel (MSAP) of the joint Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) and SAFMC. Management measures have been successful at rebuilding the Spanish mackerel stock. The ratio of biomass to B_{msy} has been increasing. Based on the 2008 SEDAR stock assessment, the king mackerel stock is not experiencing overfishing. At this time, the data are insufficient to determine biomass estimates or size of the king mackerel stock. Biological reference points have not been established.

Current Management Measures

The coastal annual catch limit (ACL) for Spanish mackerel was set at 5.69 million pounds under Amendment 18 to the federal FMP (2011). Fifty-five percent of the TAC is allocated to the coastal commercial fishery and 45% to the coastal recreational fishery.

The Chesapeake Bay states manage Spanish mackerel through size and creel limits as well as closures consistent with federal management measures. All states from New York to Florida implemented the requirements of the 2011 Omnibus Amendment for Spanish mackerel, Spot and Spotted Seatrout. Maryland and Virginia require a 14" minimum total length limit with a creel limit of 15 Spanish mackerel. The king mackerel size limit is 27" in Virginia with a creel limit of 3 fish in Virginia. Maryland has not developed regulations for king mackerel because they are rarely encountered in Maryland state waters. Commercial harvest reporting is required. Cull panels are used to reduce bycatch from pound nets set in the Potomac River by the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC).

Following public hearings, ASMFC approved an omnibus amendment for spot, seatrout and Spanish mackerel in August, 2011. The amendment includes an update to the coastal plan and includes commercial and recreational management measures and recommendations, adaptive management options, *de minimis* thresholds and exemptions, and monitoring recommendations. Maryland changed its regulations in 2012 to comply with the omnibus amendment.⁴ The states require that recreational fishermen land their catch with the head and fins intact. The MD and VA commercial fisheries limit landings to 3500 pounds per vessel/day/trip. ASMFC Addendum I establishes a 2 year pilot program to reduce the commercial pound net minimum size limit from 12" to 11.5" during July through September. The reduced size limit minimizes waste from the fishery and allows already dead fish to be landed and reported as harvest rather than discarded. Maryland submitted its first compliance report for Spanish mackerel to ASMFC in 2013.⁵

The Fisheries

In most years, the estimated recreational harvest of Spanish mackerel is greater in Virginia than in Maryland (Fig. 1). Catch estimates in the recreational fishery are imprecise with proportional standard errors in excess of 50 for most years in both Maryland and Virginia. In all years, commercial landings of Spanish mackerel from Virginia waters greatly exceed those from Maryland (Fig.2). There have been few reports of commercial landings of king mackerel from Maryland since 1993 and from Virginia since 2000. Virginia reported 11 king mackerel citations in their sport fishing tournament in 2013 while none were reported among Maryland submissions.

Figure 1

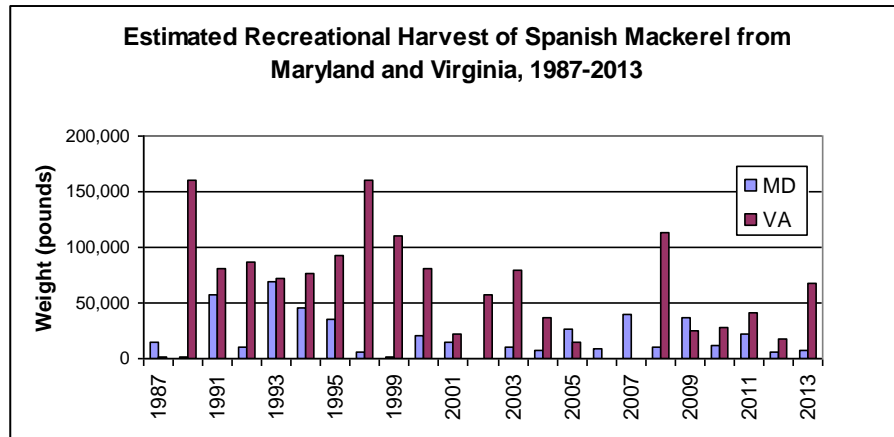
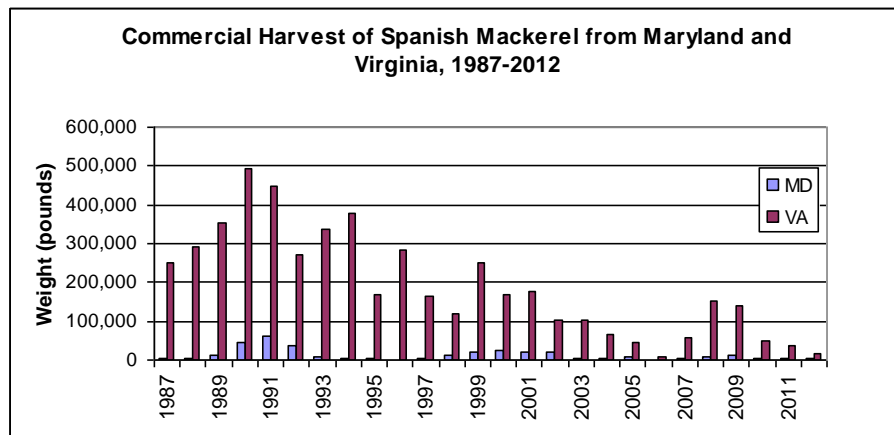


Figure 2.



Commercial harvest reports from 2012 are preliminary.²

Issues/Concerns

The 2010 Review of the ASMFC FMP for Spanish mackerel recommended additional research and monitoring. High priority recommendations included collecting basic fisheries data for better stock assessment accuracy; developing methods for fishery-independent monitoring; determining better estimates of

recruitment, natural and fishing mortality rates and stock size; and implementing ecosystem-based management.

References

- ¹ Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division June 23, 2014.
- ² Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division, commercial harvest query May 20, 2014.
- ³ 2012 Annual Report of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Arlington, VA February, 2013.
- ⁴ 2012. Rickabaugh, H.W. Jr. Maryland's Plan for Implementing Requirements Pertaining to Spanish Mackerel within ASMFC's Omnibus Amendment for Spot, Spotted Seatrout, and Spanish Mackerel.
- ⁵ 2013. Rickabaugh, H.W. Jr. Maryland Spanish Mackerel (*Scomberomorus maculatus*) Compliance Report to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission – 2012. September, 2013.

1994 Chesapeake and Atlantic Coast King and Spanish Mackerel Management Plan Implementation Table (update 06/14)			
Section	Action	Date	Comments
Stock Status	Action 1.1.1 A) Virginia will enforce a 14" TL minimum size limit and a 10 fish/person/day bag limit for Spanish mackerel.	1991 Continue	Minimum size and creel limits in place. Creel limit increased to 15 fish/person/day. VA implemented a 3500 pound commercial limit in 2012. Spanish mackerel must be landed with head and fins intact.
	Action 1.1.1 B) Maryland will enforce a 14" TL minimum size limit for both the recreational and commercial fisheries and a 10 fish/person/day bag limit for Spanish mackerel.	1993 Continue	Minimum size and creel limits in place. Creel limit increased to 15 fish/person/day. VA has a commercial limit of 3500 pounds Spanish mackerel per vessel per day. MD implemented a 3500 pound commercial limit in 2012. Spanish mackerel must be landed with head and fins intact.
	Action 1.1.2 A) Virginia will enforce a 5 fish/person/day bag limit for king mackerel.	1991 Continue	Minimum size and creel limits in place. Creel limit reduced to 3 fish/person/day.
	Action 1.1.2 B) Maryland will enforce a 5 fish/person/day bag limit for king mackerel.		MD has not developed regulations for king mackerel since most of the catch is outside state waters. Fishermen must abide by the limits imposed in the EEZ.
	Action 1.1.3. Virginia and Maryland will enforce a 20" FL or 23" TL minimum size limit for king mackerel.		Minimum size limit of 27" established in VA.
	Action 1.1.4. Virginia and Maryland will close their respective commercial and recreational fisheries for king and Spanish mackerel when such closures are in effect in Federal waters.	1995	Closures will be in compliance with South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) recommendations.
Monitoring catch and quotas, and research needs.	Action 2.1.1. Virginia and Maryland will require mandatory reporting of commercial landings	Continue	Both states are in compliance with reporting requirements.
	Action 2.1.2. Virginia and Maryland will supplement the Marine Recreational Statistics Program. MD will require charter boat logbooks.	Continue	Coastal charter boat logbook system was improved in 1994. Improvements in estimating recreational harvest are in progress under the NOAA Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP)

1994 Chesapeake and Atlantic Coast King and Spanish Mackerel Management Plan Implementation Table (update 06/14)			
Section	Action	Date	Comments
	Action 2.1.3. Jurisdictions will support stock assessment research for mackerel stocks.	Continue	VA samples Spanish mackerel for length and weight. A new King Mackerel Stock Assessment Report was completed in March 2009 for South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. The ASMFC omnibus amendment was approved in 2011 and was implemented July 1, 2012. The amendment includes monitoring and management recommendations and requires state regulatory changes now in progress. Maryland submitted its plan to implement the requirements of the omnibus amendment to ASMFC in March, 2012. Addendum I was adopted in 2013 to establish a 2 yr. pilot program to reduce waste in the commercial fishery. Maryland submitted its first Spanish mackerel compliance report to ASMFC in 2013.⁵
Waste/sublegal bycatch and hook and release mortalities	Action 3.1.1. Virginia will evaluate the use of escape panels as a means of reducing undersized bycatch. VA will enforce a 2 7/8" minimum mesh size for gill nets.	Continue	VA conducted studies on escape panels in pound nets and found they were successful at reducing bycatch.
	Action 3.1.2. Jurisdictions will support angler educational programs.	Continue	In 2008, Project FishSmart was organized by UMCES to develop a process for developing a consensus position on fisheries management options by a stakeholder group comprised of biologists, environmental organizations, tackle shop owners, charter boat operators, anglers, commercial fishermen, and tournament organizers. The pilot project species was King Mackerel and the goal of the project was to prevent overfishing and preserve a year-round fishery. A consensus goal that the fishery should be managed to prevent overfishing from occurring and recommendations were adopted Nov 7, 2008. A report was submitted to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council that recommended three options for consideration (UMCES, 2008). The Council included the three management recommendations in its public scoping document.
	Action 3.1.3. Virginia will monitor bycatch sold as crab bait from the pound net and haul seine fisheries.	1995	

1994 Chesapeake and Atlantic Coast King and Spanish Mackerel Management Plan Implementation Table (update 06/14)			
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Habitat Issues	Action 4.1.1. Jurisdictions will continue to work with the Chesapeake Bay Programs, the Coastal Bays initiative, and water quality improvement goals for the Bay and coastal areas.	Continue	The CBP has adopted new water quality goals and are working towards attaining the goals. Status of the water quality indices can be found on their website at www.chesapeakebay.net

Acronyms:

ACL = Annual Catch Limit

ASMFC = Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

CBP = Chesapeake Bay Program

EEZ = Exclusive Economic Zone

UMCES = University of Maryland Center for Environmental Studies

PRFC = Potomac River Fisheries Commission